

What we claim and desire to secure by Letters Patent is:

1. An arrangement for controlling an electronic device, said arrangement comprising an input unit with an optical sensor for recording images, and a signal-processing unit for identifying predetermined information in at least one of said images and for controlling the electronic device dependent upon said predetermined information, characterized in that the input unit in a first function mode is arranged to convert said at least one image to a current text string containing a sequence of characters, and that the signal-processing unit is arranged to control the electronic device on the basis of the current text string.

2. An arrangement according to claim 1, wherein the signal-processing unit is arranged to control the electronic device on the basis of the format of the current text string.

3. An arrangement according to claim 2, wherein the signal-processing unit is arranged to match the format of the current text string to a format database comprising predetermined formats, each of which is associated with at least one command, and to generate the command associated with the current text string, so as to control the electronic device.

4. An arrangement according to claim 3, wherein said command initiates execution of software on the electronic device.

5. An arrangement according to claim 3, wherein said format database comprises predetermined formats of different types of addresses.

6. An arrangement according to claim 3, which further comprises a database editor which allows a user to add formats and associated commands to the format database.

7. An arrangement according to claim 1, wherein the signal-processing unit is arranged to identify an address in the current text string and to cause the electronic device to connect to said address.

8. An arrangement according to claim 1, wherein the signal-processing unit is arranged to cause, when identifying an address for electronic mail in said text string, the electronic device to open a program for electronic mail.

9. An arrangement according to claim 1, wherein the signal-processing unit is arranged to cause, when identifying a web address in said text string, the electronic device to open a web browser.

10. An arrangement according to claim 1, wherein the signal-processing unit is arranged to cause, when identifying a phone or fax number in said text string, the electronic device to connect to the phone or fax number.

11. An arrangement according to claim 1, wherein the input unit in the first function mode is a handheld text scanner.

12. An arrangement according to claim 1, which is selectively operable in a control function mode, in which the signal-processing unit is arranged to control the electronic device on the basis of the current text string, preferably the format thereof.

13. An arrangement according to claim 1, wherein the signal-processing unit is at least partly placed in the same casing as the electronic device.

14. An arrangement according to claim 1, wherein the input unit is arranged for wireless communication with the electronic device.

15. An arrangement according to claim 1, wherein the input unit in a further function mode is controllable to record single images.

16. An arrangement according to claim 1, wherein the input unit in a second function mode is arranged to control a cursor on a display of the electronic device.

17. An arrangement according to claim 16, wherein the input unit is arranged to automatically select function mode on the basis of the contents of said at least one image.

18. An arrangement according to claim 16, wherein the input unit is arranged to operate in the second function mode when said at least one image contains a predetermined pattern.

19. An arrangement according to claim 15, wherein the input unit is arranged to automatically select a

(continued)

(continued claim 19)

predefined function mode, preferably the first function mode, in the absence of a predetermined pattern in said at least one image.

20. An arrangement according to claim 18, wherein the predetermined pattern consists of a position-coding pattern, preferably an absolute position-coding pattern.

21. An arrangement according to claim 1, which further comprises a product, on which a plurality of command words are indicated.

22. A method for controlling an electronic device, comprising the steps of operating a handheld input unit to record at least one image, identifying predetermined information in said at least one image, and controlling the electronic device dependent upon said predetermined information, characterized by the further steps of converting said at least one image to a current text string including a sequence of characters, and controlling the electronic device on the basis of the current text string.

23. A method according to claim 22, comprising the further step of controlling the electronic device on the basis of the format of the current text string.

24. A method according to claim 23, comprising the step of matching the format of the current text string to a format database comprising predetermined formats, each

(continued)

(continued claim 24)

of which is associated with a command, and generating the command associated with the current text string, so as to control the electronic device.

25. A method according to claim 24, wherein said command initiates execution of software on the electronic device.

26. A method according to claim 24, wherein the format database comprises predetermined formats for different types of addresses.

27. A method according to claim 22, comprising the steps of searching for an address in the current text string, and, when an address is found, causing the electronic device to connect to said address.

28. An input unit with at least a first and a second function mode, comprising a detector for capturing images and an image processor for processing the images to achieve said two function modes, characterized in that the input unit is arranged to change from the first to the second function mode when the image processor detects a first piece of predetermined information in one of said images.

29. An input unit according to claim 28, wherein said first piece of predetermined information is a predetermined pattern.

30. An input unit according to claim 28, which is arranged to change from the second function mode to the

(continued)

(continued claim 30)

first function mode when it detects a second piece of predetermined information in one of said images.

31. An input unit according to claim 28, wherein said predetermined information consists of a position-coding pattern, preferably an absolute position-coding pattern.

32. An input unit according to claim 28, wherein the first function mode is a mouse function, and the second function mode is an input function, preferably a scanner function.